

**Utah's Division of Child and Family Services**

# **Western Region Report**

## **Qualitative Case Review Findings**

**Review Conducted**

**March 26-29, 2012**

*A Report by*

*The Office of Services Review, Department of Human Services*

# **I. Introduction**

The Western Region Qualitative Case Review (QCR) for FY2012 was held the week of March 26-29, 2012. Reviewers were selected from the Office of Services Review, the Division of Child and Family Services, community partners and other interested parties. There were two out-of-state representatives from Oklahoma who participated as full week reviewers. Reviewers also included individuals from the following Utah organizations:

- Children's Justice Center
- Christmas Box House

There were 25 cases randomly selected for the Western Region review. The case sample included 20 foster care cases and five in-home cases. The week prior to the review, one case was dropped due to egregious circumstances. Cases were selected from the American Fork, Heber, Nephi, Orem, Provo, Spanish Fork, and Wasatch Mental Health offices. A certified lead reviewer and shadow reviewer were assigned to each case. Information was obtained through in-depth interviews with the child (if old enough to participate), his or her parents or other guardians, foster parents (if child was placed in foster care), caseworker, teacher, therapist, other service providers, and others having a significant role in the child's life. Additionally, the child's file, including prior CPS investigations and other available records, was reviewed.

Staff from the Office of Services Review met with region staff on June 18, 2012 in an exit conference to review the results of the region's QCR. Scores and data analysis were reviewed with the region.

## **II. Stakeholder Observations**

The results of the QCR should be considered within a broad context of local and regional interaction with community partners. Each year Office of Services Review staff members interview key community stakeholders such as foster parents, providers, representatives from the legal community, other community agencies, and DCFS staff. On March 21, 2012 members of the OSR staff interviewed individuals and groups of DCFS staff and community partners. DCFS staff who were interviewed included the Regional Director, region administrators, supervisors, and caseworkers. Community partners interviewed included guardians ad litem, an assistant attorney general, representatives from Wasatch Mental Health, and a group of foster parents. Strengths and opportunities for improvement were identified by the various groups of stakeholders as described below.

### **ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL AND GUARDIAN AD LITEM**

#### **Strengths**

Overall, caseworkers are responsive and willing to work with the attorneys. There's a good working relationship. Usually the attorneys can talk things through with workers and come to a resolution. DCFS supervisors have a lot of experience so there is respect between the attorneys and the supervisors.

DCFS is careful about removing children from their homes. Children who are getting removed are removed because they definitely need to be removed.

There is a level of friendliness between all partners in the community. The Regional Director is very open to hearing about problems and solving them. He's very supportive of the legal partners. There is a comfortable, working relationship between them.

Judge Sansbury very much relies on the recommendations of the Child and Family Team. Most attorneys attend team meetings, so most conflicts are resolved before the cases go to court. Attorneys find these meetings very helpful.

Public defenders are better paid now than they have been in the past, so parents are getting better counsel.

#### **Improvement Opportunities**

There was a huge influx of new workers. Some of them stayed only briefly, so DCFS had to hire additional new workers. For those reasons DCFS has been going through a learning curve. When a case changes workers, things don't get done as quickly.

Although communication with caseworkers has gotten a lot better, the biggest frustration for GAL's is still the lack of information received from caseworkers and not receiving court reports

from them on time. For example, GAL's sometimes find out long after the fact that children have changed placement, or they find out about Family Team Meetings the day of the meeting. DCFS is falling farther and farther behind on resources. Workers have to go to committees to request funds for anything they need, such as a parental fitness evaluation. In-home services have gone by the wayside. There isn't money for in-home services to prevent removing children. Some children have an insufficient amount of visit time with their parents because DCFS doesn't have the resources to provide supervision for the visits.

Every GAL in the Provo office is working a double caseload. They have over 200 cases instead of 100, which is the recommended national standard. Judges caseloads are also too high. They have needed a new judge in Fourth District for five years.

The workers are trying to design their Child and Family Plans (CFP) around an adjudication order. They think they have to use only the petition to create the CFP. The assistant attorneys general want workers to look at parent behaviors and write the plan to address behaviors, not just copy specific wording from the petition.

## **FOSTER PARENTS**

### **Strengths**

DCFS is recognizing foster parents as professionals. DCFS realizes foster parents are the ones who have the children every day and have the most knowledge about them.

The region has expanded the amount of respite care DCFS foster parents can use from one day per month to three days per month.

The Resource Family Consultants (RFC) are very supportive of foster parents.

The Utah Foster Care Foundation provides support for foster parents. They started a Facebook group so foster parents can keep in touch. There are also six foster parent cluster groups in the Western region. Training is provided at each monthly meeting.

Christmas Box House has been providing some resources such as clothing and hygiene items.

The Regional Director has been very supportive of foster parents. They know he cares about them. For example, he hand delivered checks for Joyful Season. Foster parents also appreciated the support they got from DCFS on the bills they addressed during the legislative session.

### **Improvement Opportunities**

Sometimes caseworkers don't give foster parents all the information they have about the children.

Options for therapy are pretty limited. Foster parents are expected to use Wasatch Mental Health unless they petition for a different therapist, unless the child already has been working with a different therapist, in which case they can continue. Foster parents feel Wasatch Mental Health is harder to work with than other providers are.

Caseworkers need to do a better job of communicating critical information about children to the Resource Family Consultants so information can be relayed accurately to the foster parents. Sometimes information about the child's age, gender, or disability is inaccurate, which means foster parents sometimes agree to take children, then find out that the age or gender is different than they were told, or the child has a disability they weren't told about.

Proctor agencies provide trackers and other services to proctor parents that DCFS foster parents don't get. There needs to be a way for DCFS foster parents to access these kinds of services. Level 1 and Level 2 homes also need more resources. They're having to deal with lots of difficult behaviors such as encopresis, enuresis, and sexual reactivity.

Foster parents have taken some pay cuts, and they really miss the special needs money that used to be available for the kids. Every year it gets harder to be a foster parent. Foster care rates need to be a lot higher. Mileage and clothing allowances haven't increased for years.

## **WASATCH MENTAL HEALTH**

### **Strengths**

The child welfare system works pretty well. Wasatch Mental Health (WMH) has established good working relationships with DCFS supervisors. If there's a problem, they know who to call to get things working again.

Utah County has a multi-agency staffing board. The board recommends treatment, assessments, services, etc. It's nice to see board members step up to provide services and find a way to meet a family's needs.

The Strengthening Families program (in which families learn to communicate and see the value of having meals together) has been great. They wish there was more funding for it so more families could participate. The program has been so popular it has spread from WMH to two high schools.

Access to caseworkers has improved since they went back to a five-day work week, although they used to hear back from most caseworkers even when they were off on Friday.

WMH is pushing a lot more to involve parents in the treatment of their children. Mentally ill children usually have mentally ill parents, so the parent needs to be involved. They regularly hold parenting groups.

### **Improvement Opportunities**

The high turnover of caseworkers is a challenge because WMH has to constantly work to establish relationships with the new workers.

WMH feels going from local to centralized intake for CPS referrals was a bad move because intake is now disconnected from the local people who report abuse. WMH bypasses the state referral line and gives referrals directly to the local DCFS supervisor.

There needs to be greater emphasis on prevention of abuse and neglect rather than treatment.

There are many people in the community who don't qualify for free services but can't afford to pay for services on their own. It's also difficult to get services for undocumented children. Accessing dental care is especially difficult.

## **DCFS ADMINISTRATORS, SUPERVISORS, and CASEWORKERS**

### **Strengths**

Worker morale is better now than it was a year ago. Caseloads are lower and they've been able to hire new workers. They moved Resource Family Consultant and Contracts positions so they would have more caseworker positions. There are only a couple of teams on which workers have more than 16 cases. They created a new CPS team which brought CPS caseloads down.

Incentives have started being awarded again, which the supervisors have appreciated.

A clinical team was created to provide Family Preservation services. They have been very helpful on some cases, but they are already overloaded with cases. It's been great to have a clinical worker on the case to support the primary caseworker.

DCFS meets regularly with Office of Licensing (OL) and Utah Foster Care Foundation to iron out problems. Department of Workforce Services, DCFS, and OL are working together to get the subsidy to kin families quicker.

The Strengthening Families program is going strong. They have a really strong partnership with the community. Employees from Detention, JJS, Juvenile Court, WMH, and the school districts have been trained to run the program. It's a very simple yet very effective approach that families love. Families get together to eat dinner and are taught basic communication skills.

The region has implemented a new training to change the DCFS culture and make it more user friendly.

DCFS has been focusing more on non-custodial fathers. There are lots of requirements to provide notice to fathers that DCFS is involved with their children.

The quality of the caseworkers in general is exceptional.

The administrative team is excellent at taking on assignments and doing them and taking on problems and solving them.

### **Improvement Opportunities**

The last group of new caseworkers hired felt parts of the training they were given were a waste of time. The timing of when the training is offered is also problematic. Some workers have to wait months to get into training, during which time they can't take cases, so it can be five months before a new worker is assigned any cases. CPS workers feel that only a few days of the three-month training are applicable to their work. The training is very "ivory tower" and not "hands on" enough.

There are too many assessment tools right now, yet caseworkers still don't do a very good job of assessing the real issues that are happening in the family. There is also too big a delay in getting the results of assessments that are done outside of DCFS. The CANS assessment is used differently from team to team.

Judges think foster care is the answer, so they order children into foster care. DCFS has to work hard to prevent judges from putting children in foster care. Each of the assistant attorneys general (AG's) seems to have a different opinion about when children should come into care. The lack of trust the AG's have around leaving children in the home will be a barrier to shifting from foster care to in-home cases.

On some CPS cases, DCFS is investigating their own foster parents. Also, the findings of some CPS investigations aren't being supported by the judges. It's not clear which cases are conflict cases and which are not. DCFS has done investigations, and then the judge declared it a conflict and ordered an independent investigation.

The length of time to get foster parents licensed is still an issue. It's taking four months to get licensed.

They are seeing more children coming into care who are eligible for DSPD (Division of Services for People with Disabilities) services. These children come into foster care just to get DSPD services.

Administrators are concerned that new things are constantly talked about and added to the caseworkers' caseloads, but nothing gets taken away. There are always new federal guidelines that add to the workload. They need to streamline. There are too many committees and too much paperwork.

The region has 29 staff members who are either doing post-college work or have just completed it. There is nowhere for them to advance to within DCFS. DCFS needs to create a career path for its employees like other agencies have done.

The new drug contract has been painful. The region had worked through prior issues with Utah County and agreed on who would pay for what. With the new contract they're going to get the same services they got before from the same provider, but at a higher price.

DCFS needs a public education campaign like Workmen's Compensation has. Workmen's Compensation explains in TV ads who they are and what they do. The public needs to be educated about what DCFS does and they need to see success stories.

There needs to be some funding to pay for things like tutoring services or recreational activities children want to do over the summer. Children have some legitimate needs that aren't getting funded.



### **III. Child and Family Status, System Performance, Analysis, and Trends**





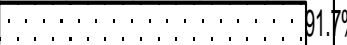




The QCR findings are presented in graphic form to help quantify the observations of the qualitative review. Graphs show a comparison of scores for past years' reviews with the current review. The graphs of the two broad domains of Child and Family Status and System Performance show the percent of cases in which the key indicators were judged to be "acceptable." A six-point rating scale is used to determine whether or not an indicator is judged to be acceptable. Reviewers scored each of the cases reviewed using this rating scale. The range of ratings is as follows:

- 1: Completely Unacceptable
- 2: Substantially Unacceptable
- 3: Partially Unacceptable
- 4: Minimally Acceptable
- 5: Substantially Acceptable
- 6: Optimal Status/Performance

Child and Family Status and System Performance are evaluated using 15 key indicators. Graphs presenting the overall scores for each domain are presented below. They are followed by graphs showing the distribution of scores for each indicator within each of the two domains.

## Child and Family Status Indicators

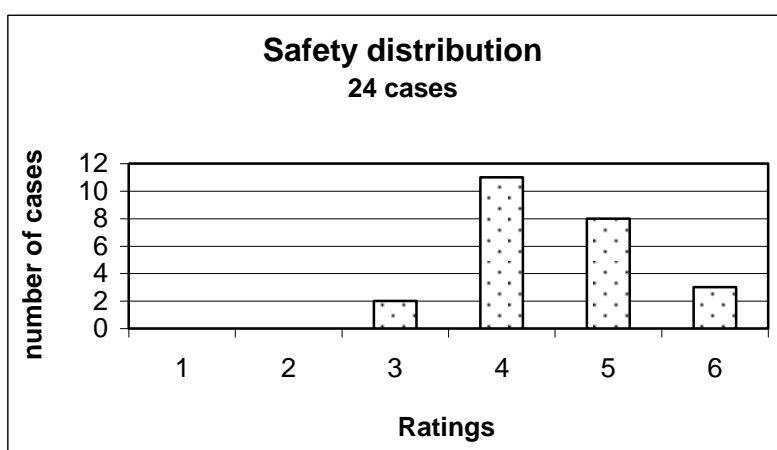
### Overall Status

Western Child Status									
	# of	# of	Standard: 70% on all indicators	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	Trends
	cases	cases	except Safety which is 85%					Current	
	(+)	(-)	Standard: Criteria 85% on overall score					Scores	
Safety	22	2	 91.7%	91%	83%	83%	100%	92%	Decreased but above standard
Stability	20	4	 83.3%	65%	63%	71%	75%	83%	Improved and above standard
Prospect for Permanence	16	8	 66.7%	61%	54%	71%	63%	67%	Improved but below standard
Health/Physical Well-being	24	0	 100.0%	100%	96%	100%	100%	100%	Status Quo and above standard
Emot./Behavioral Well-being	22	2	 91.7%	87%	91%	92%	96%	92%	Decreased but above standard
Learning	21	3	 87.5%	83%	83%	92%	92%	88%	Decreased but above standard
Family Connections	17	1	 94.4%					94%	Improved and above standard
Satisfaction	22	1	 95.7%	96%	87%	88%	88%	96%	Improved and above standard
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>2</b>	 91.7%	<b>87%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>92%</b>	Decreased but above standard
			0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%						

## Safety

**Summative Questions:** Is the child safe from threats of harm in his/her daily living, learning, working and recreational environments? Are others in the child's daily environments safe from the child? Does the child avoid self-endangerment and refrain from using behaviors that may put self and others at risk of harm?

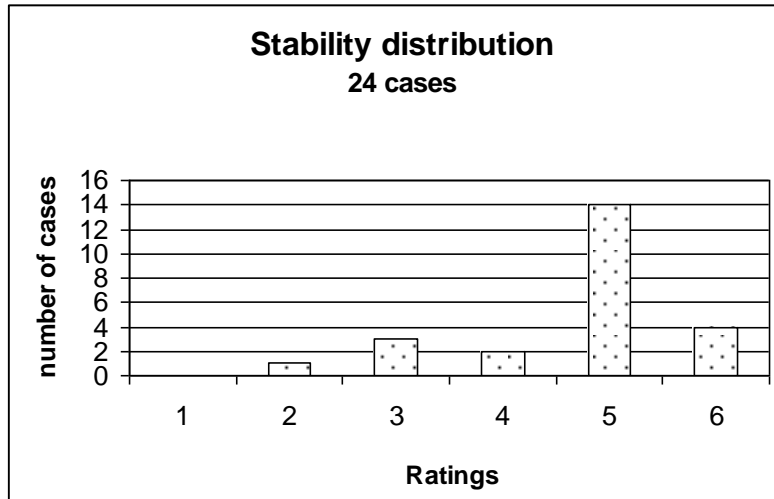
**Findings:** 92% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decline from last year's perfect score of 100% but well above standard. Out of the 24 cases reviewed, only two had unacceptable scores on Safety. In one case the youth was safe; however, the youth was putting others at risk due to his aggressive behaviors. In the other case the child was not safe due to the drug use of his father with whom he was living.



## Stability

**Summative Questions:** Has the child's placement setting been consistent and stable? Are the child's daily living and learning arrangements stable and free from risk of disruption? If not, are appropriate services being provided to achieve stability and reduce the probability of disruption?

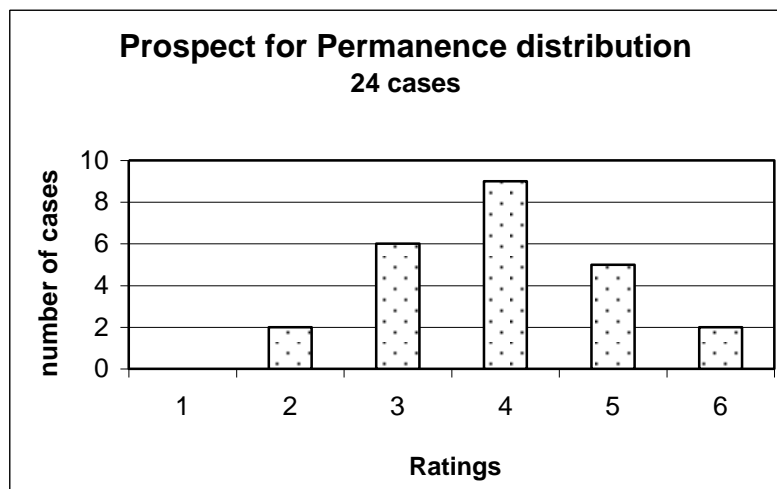
**Findings:** 83% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is an increase from last year's score of 75% and above standard.



## Prospects for Permanence

**Summative Questions:** Is the child living with caregivers that the child, caregivers, and other stakeholders believe will endure until the child becomes independent? If not, is a permanency plan presently being implemented on a timely basis that will ensure that the child will live in enduring relationships that provide a sense of family, stability, and belonging?

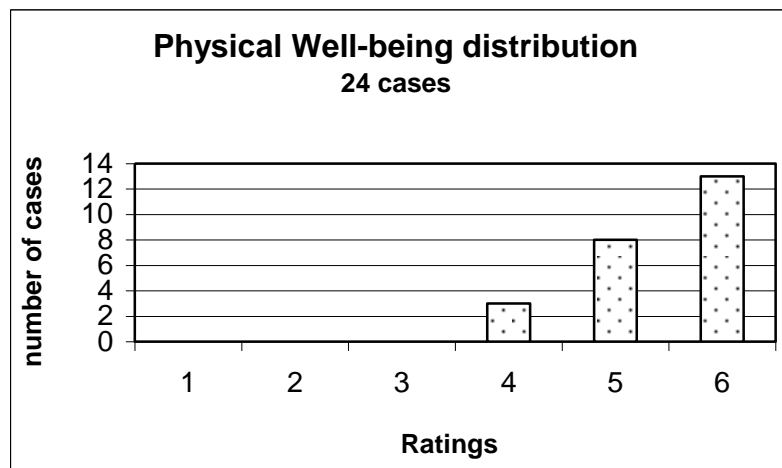
**Findings:** 67% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is an increase from last year's score of 63% but still below the 70% standard.



## Health/Physical Well-Being

**Summative Questions:** Is the child in good health? Are the child's basic physical needs being met? Does the child have health care services, as needed?

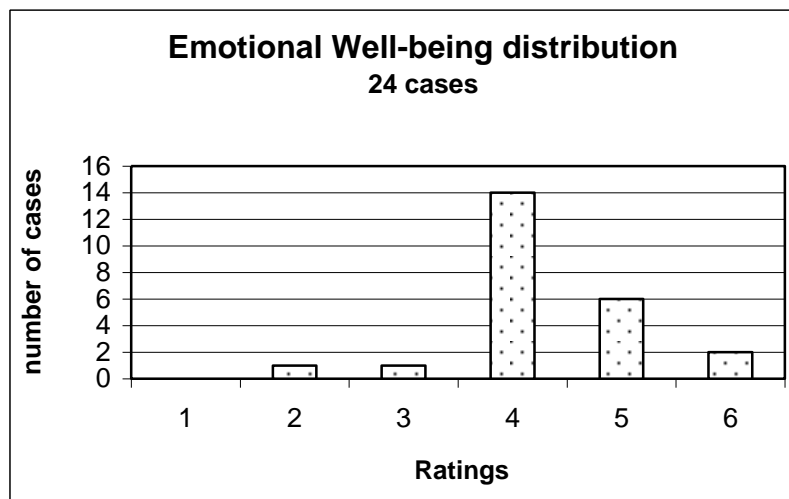
**Findings:** 100% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is the same as last year's score.



## Emotional/Behavioral Well-Being

**Summative Questions:** Is the child doing well emotionally and behaviorally? If not, is the child making reasonable progress toward stable and adequate functioning, emotionally and behaviorally, at home and school?

**Findings:** 92% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a slight decrease from last year's excellent score of 96% but well above standard.

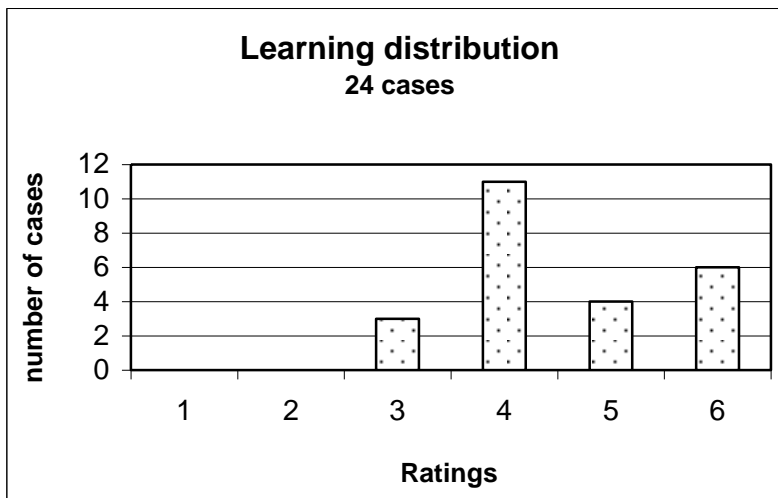


## Learning Progress

**Summative Question:** (For children age five and older.) Is the child learning, progressing and gaining essential functional capabilities at a rate commensurate with his/her age and ability?

Note: There is a supplementary scale used with children under the age of five that puts greater emphasis on developmental progress. Scores from the two scales are combined for this report.

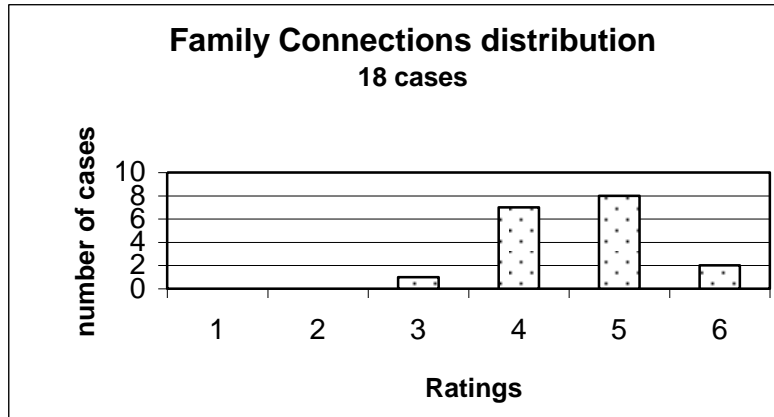
**Findings:** 88% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is slightly lower than last year's score of 92% but well above standard.



## Family Connections

**Summative Question:** While the child and family are living apart, are family relationships and connections being maintained through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies, unless compelling reasons exist for keeping them apart?

**Findings:** 94% of cases scored acceptable on Overall Family Connections. This is a new indicator so there is no comparative data from the previous year. This indicator measures whether or not the relationship between the child and the mother, father, siblings, and other important family members is being maintained. The scores for the Siblings and Other were identical at 100%. The score for mothers was somewhat lower at 87%. The score for fathers was significantly lower at just 46%. In a majority of cases in which fathers were applicable, the connection between the child and father was not being acceptably maintained.



Western-Family Connections FY2012			
	# of	# of	FY12
	cases	cases	Current
	(+)	(-)	Scores
<b>Overall Connections</b>	17	1	<b>94%</b>
Siblings	4	0	<b>100%</b>
Mother	13	2	<b>87%</b>
Father	6	7	<b>46%</b>
Other	13	0	<b>100%</b>

## Satisfaction

**Summative Question:** Are the child, parent/guardian, and substitute caregiver satisfied with the supports and services they are receiving?

**Findings:** 96% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6) on the overall Satisfaction score. This is an eight-point improvement from last year's score of 88%. Reviewers rated the satisfaction of children, mothers, fathers, and caregivers. Scores for the individual parties ranged from 94% for caregivers to just 60% for fathers. One case was not scored on satisfaction because the rights of both parents had been terminated, the child was under the age of 12, the child had just moved to a new placement a few days prior to the review, and the previous caregiver was not interviewed; therefore none of the parties could be scored.



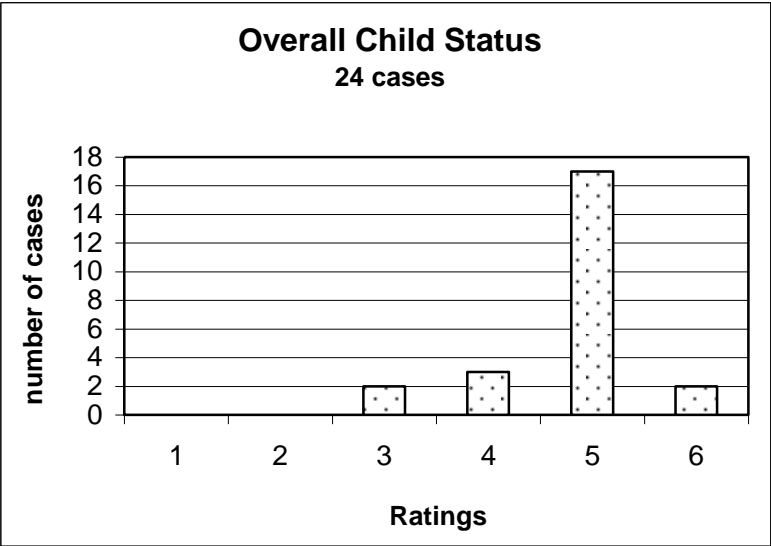
Western-Satisfaction FY2012			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY12 Current Scores
Satisfaction	22	1	96%
Child	10	1	91%
Mother	12	4	75%
Father	6	4	60%
Caregiver	16	1	94%

## Overall Child and Family Status

**Summative Questions:** Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for the Child and Family Status indicators, how well are this child and family presently doing? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall Child and Family Status using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the first seven status indicators (minus Satisfaction) must score acceptable in order for the Overall Score to be acceptable. A unique condition affects the rating of Overall Child and Family status in every case: The Safety indicator always acts as a “trump” so that the Overall Child and Family status rating cannot be acceptable unless the Safety indicator is also acceptable.




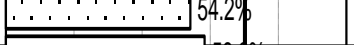
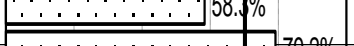
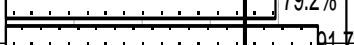
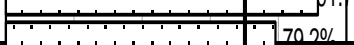

**Findings:** 92% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). The overall Child and Family Status score decreased from last year’s score of 100% but remained well above the 85% standard.





## System Performance Indicators

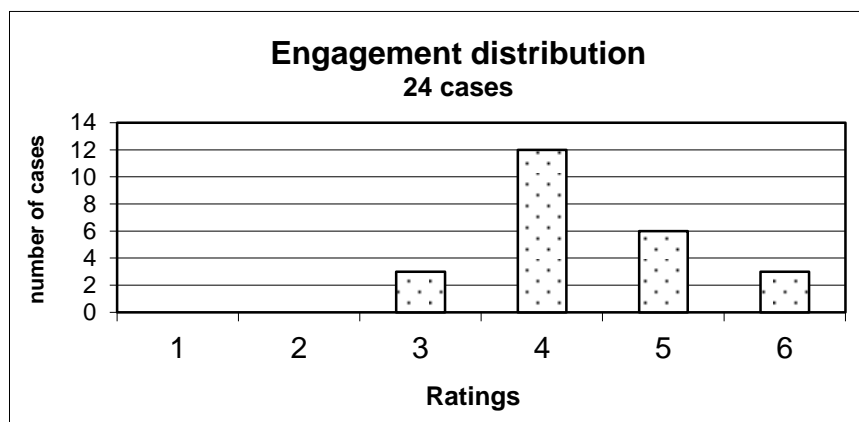
### Overall System

Western System Performance									
	# of	# of		FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	Trends
	cases	cases	Standard: 70% on all indicators					Current	
	(+)	(-)	Standard: 85% on overall score					Scores	
Engagement	21	3	 87.5%	91%	92%	88%	75%	88%	Improved and above standard
Teaming	16	8	 66.7%	91%	67%	79%	67%	67%	Status Quo and below standard
Assessment	17	7	 70.8%	70%	75%	75%	75%	71%	Decreased but above standard
Long-term View	13	11	 54.2%	65%	54%	71%	58%	54%	Decreased and below standard
Child & Family Plan	14	10	 58.3%	74%	75%	71%	38%	58%	Improved but below standard
Intervention Adequacy	19	5	 79.2%	96%	92%	88%	88%	79%	Decreased but above standard
Tracking & Adapting	22	2	 91.7%	100%	88%	92%	75%	92%	Improved and above standard
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	 79.2%	<b>100%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>79%</b>	Decreased and below standard
			0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%						

## Child and Family Engagement

**Summative Questions:** Has the agency made concerted efforts to actively involve parents and children in the service process and in making decisions about the child and family? To what extent has the agency used rapport building strategies, including special accommodations, to engage the family?

**Findings:** 88% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a nice increase from last year's score of 75% and above standard. Separate scores were given for child, mother, father and guardian. An overall score was then selected by the reviewer. Scores for the various groups ranged from a high of 100% for the child to 63% for fathers.

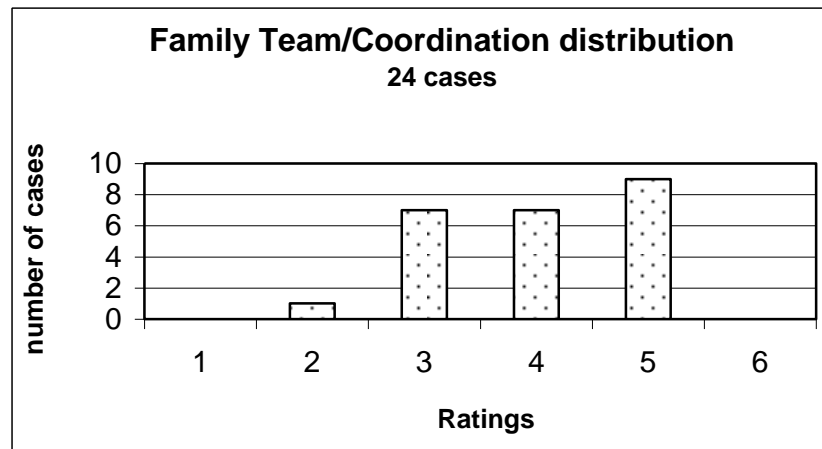


Western-Engagement FY2012			
	# of	# of	FY12
	cases	cases	Current
	(+)	(-)	Scores
Engagement	21	3	88%
Child	16	0	100%
Mother	15	5	75%
Father	10	6	63%
Guardian	8	1	89%

## Child and Family Teaming

**Summative Questions:** Do the child, family, and service providers function as a team? Do the actions of the team reflect a pattern of effective teamwork and collaboration that benefits the child and family? Is there effective coordination in the provision of services across all providers?

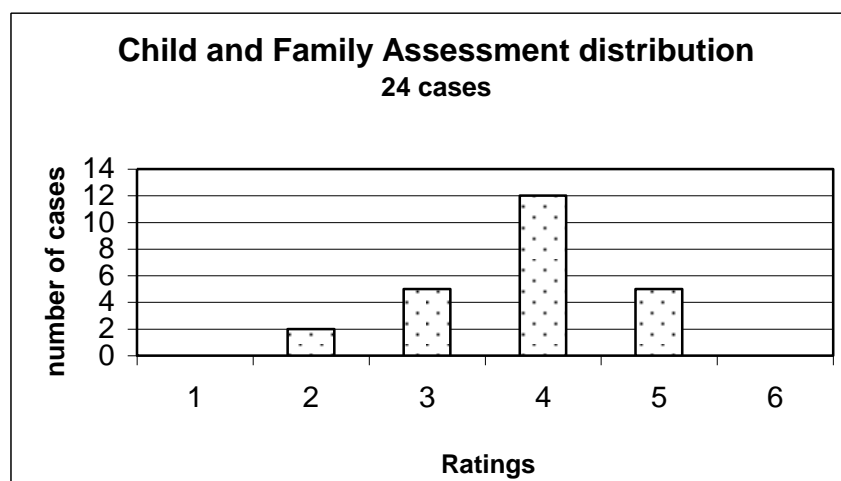
**Findings:** 67% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is identical to last year's score and is below standard.



## Child and Family Assessment

**Summative Questions:** Are the current, obvious and substantial strengths and needs of the child and family identified through existing assessments, both formal and informal, so that all interveners collectively have a “big picture” understanding of the child and family? Do the assessments help the team draw conclusions on how to provide effective services to meet the child’s needs for enduring permanency, safety, and well-being? Are the critical underlying issues identified that must be resolved for the child to live safely with his/her family independent of agency supervision or to obtain an independent and enduring home?

**Findings:** 71% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 75% but above the 70% standard. Individual scores were given for this indicator. The highest score was the Caregiver score at 83%. The Child's score was slightly lower at 79%. Mothers and Fathers scored significantly lower at 53% and 44% respectively.

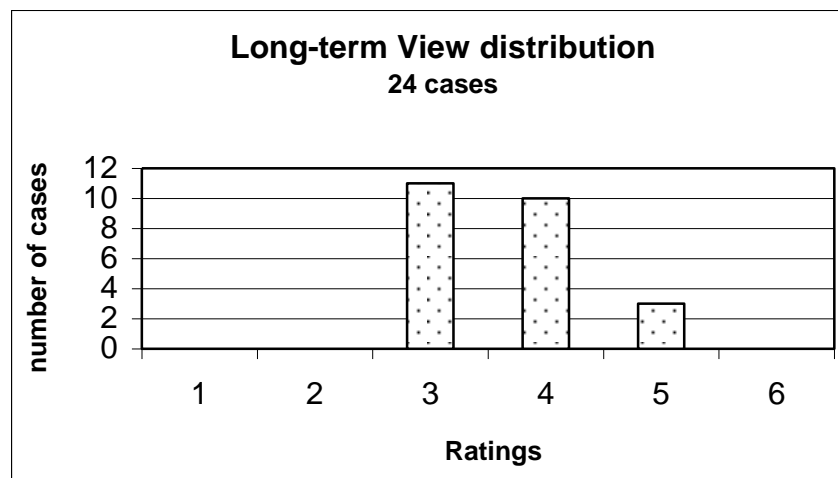


Western-Assessment FY2012			
	# of cases (+)	# of cases (-)	FY12 Current Scores
Assessment	17	7	71%
Child	19	5	79%
Mother	8	7	53%
Father	8	10	44%
Caregiver	15	3	83%

## Long-Term View

**Summative Questions:** Is there a path that will lead the family and/or child toward achieving enduring safety and permanency without DCFS interventions? Is it realistic and achievable? Does the team, particularly the child/family, understand the path and destination? Does the path provide steps and address the next major transition(s) toward achieving enduring safety and permanence independent of DCFS interventions?

**Findings:** 54% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 58% and well below the 70% standard.

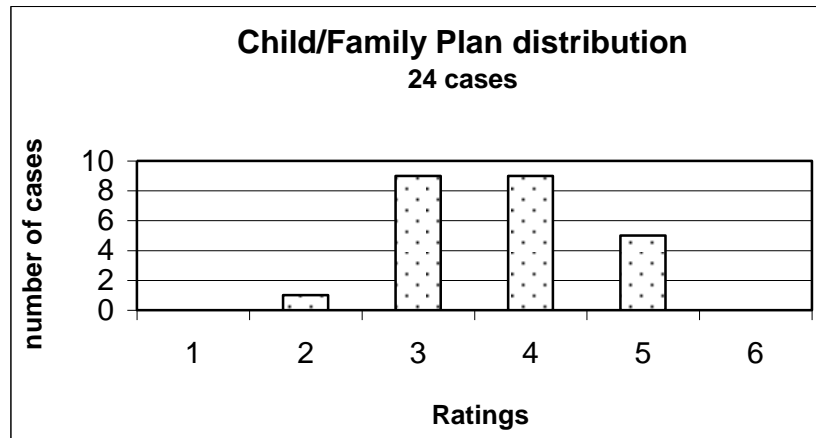


## Child and Family Plan

**Summative Questions:** Is the Child and Family Plan individualized and relevant to needs and goals? Are supports, services and interventions assembled into a holistic and coherent service process that provides a mix of elements uniquely matched to the child/family's situation and

preferences? Does the combination of supports and services fit the child and family's situation so as to maximize potential results and minimize conflicting strategies and inconveniences?

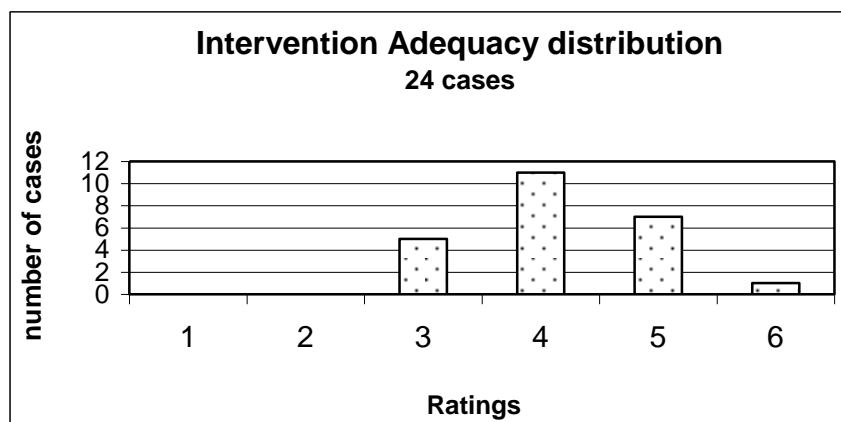
**Findings:** 58% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a significant increase over last year's score of 38% but still well below standard.



## Intervention Adequacy

**Summative Questions:** To what degree are the planned interventions, services, and supports being provided to the child and family of sufficient power (precision, intensity, duration, fidelity, and consistency) and beneficial effect to produce results that would enable the child and family to live safely and independent from DCFS?

**Findings:** 79% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). This is a decrease from last year's score of 88% but still above standard. This indicator was scored separately for Child, Mother, Father, and Caregiver. The scores for Child and Caregiver met or exceeded the Overall Score at 80% and 90% respectively. The score for Mothers and Fathers were substantially lower at 40% and 54% respectively.

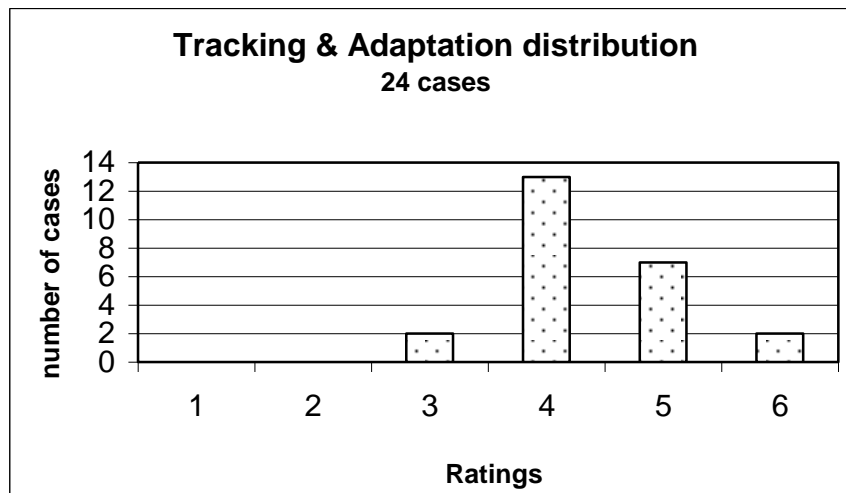


Western-Intervention Adequacy FY2012			
	# of	# of	FY12
	cases	cases	Current
	(+)	(-)	Scores
Intervention Adequacy	16	4	80%
Child	16	4	80%
Mother	4	6	40%
Father	7	6	54%
Caregiver	9	1	90%

## Tracking and Adaptation

**Summative Questions:** Are the child and family status, service process, and progress routinely monitored and evaluated by the team? Are services modified to respond to the changing needs of the child and family and to apply knowledge gained about service efforts and results to create a self-correcting service process?

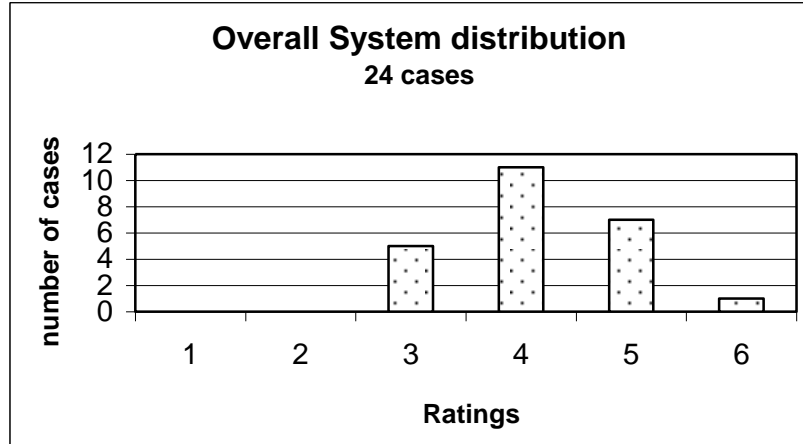
**Findings:** 92% of cases reviewed were in the acceptable range (4-6). This is a substantial increase over last year's score of 75% and far above standard.



## Overall System Performance

**Summative Questions:** Based on the Qualitative Case Review scores determined for System Performance indicators, how well is the service system functioning for this child now? A special scoring procedure is used to determine Overall System Performance using the 6-point rating scale. In addition to scoring a 4 with this procedure, four of the seven system performance indicators must score acceptable in order for the overall score to be acceptable.

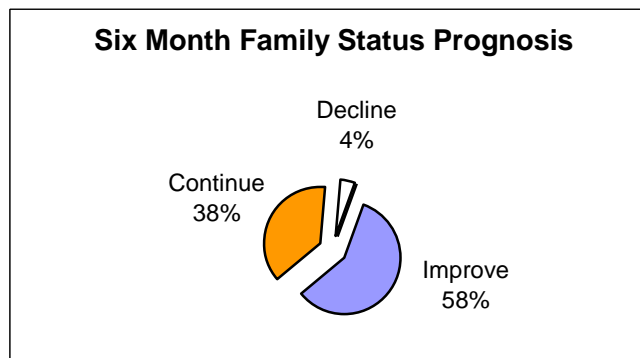
**Findings:** 79% of cases reviewed were within the acceptable range (4-6). The Overall System Performance score was slightly below the 85% standard last year (83%) and fell further below standard this year.



## Status Forecast

One additional measure of case status is the reviewers' prognosis of the child and family's likely status in the next six months, given the current level of system performance. Reviewers respond to this question: "Based on current DCFS involvement for this child, family, and caregiver, is the child's overall status likely to improve, stay about the same, or decline over the next six months?"

Of the 24 cases reviewed, 58% (14 cases) anticipated an improvement in family status over the next six months. In 38% (9) of the cases, family status was likely to stay about the same. There was only one case where the family's status was expected to decline over the next six months.





## Outcome Matrix

The display below presents a matrix analysis of the service testing results during the current QCR. Each of the cells in the matrix shows the percent of children and families experiencing one of four possible outcomes:

- Outcome 1: child and family status acceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 2: child and family status unacceptable, system performance acceptable
- Outcome 3: child and family status acceptable, system performance unacceptable
- Outcome 4: child and family status unacceptable, system performance unacceptable

The desired result is to have as many children and families in Outcome 1 as possible and as few in Outcome 4 as possible. It is fortunate that some children and families do well in spite of unacceptable system performance (Outcome 3). Experience suggests that these are most often either unusually resilient or resourceful children and families, or children and families who have some “champion” or advocate who protects them from the shortcomings of the system. Unfortunately, there may also be some children and families who, in spite of good system performance, do not do well (these children and families would fall in Outcome 2).

The outcome matrix for children and families reviewed during the Western Region review indicates that 75% of the cases had acceptable ratings on both Child Status and System Performance. There was one case that rated unacceptable on both Child Status and System Performance.

	<b>Favorable Status of Child</b>		<b>Unfavorable Status of Child</b>		
	<b>Outcome 1</b>		<b>Outcome 2</b>		
<b>Acceptable System Performance</b>	Good status for the child, agency services presently acceptable.		Poor status for the child, agency services minimally acceptable but limited in reach or efficacy.		
	n= 18		n= 1		
	75.0%		4.2%		<b>79.2%</b>
<b>Unacceptable System Performance</b>	<b>Outcome 3</b>		<b>Outcome 4</b>		
	Good status for the child, agency Mixed or presently unacceptable.		Poor status for the child, agency presently unacceptable.		
	n= 4		n= 1		
	16.7%		4.2%		<b>20.8%</b>
	<b>91.7%</b>		<b>8.3%</b>		<b>100%</b>

## V. Analysis of the Data

### RESULTS BY CASE TYPE

The following tables compare how the different Case Types performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. There were no family preservation (PFP/PFR) or voluntary cases (PSC). The court ordered In-Home services cases (PSS) scored 100% on both Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance. Foster Care cases scored somewhat lower on Overall Child Status (89%) and significantly lower and below standard on Overall System Performance (74%). All key indicators scored above standard on in-home cases while Teaming, Assessment, Long-term View, and Child and Family Plan all fell below standard on foster care cases.

Case Type		# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Foster Care	SCF	19	89%	63%	89%	84%	63%	68%	42%	53%	79%	89%	74%
In-Home	PSS	5	100%	80%	100%	100%	80%	80%	100%	80%	80%	100%	100%
In-Home	PSC	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
In-Home	PFP	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
In-Home	PFR	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Collection of demographic information regarding cases included in the case sample includes the question, “Did the child come into services due to delinquency instead of abuse and neglect?” Only three of the 24 cases (13%) in the sample are reported to have entered services due to delinquency rather than abuse or neglect. The following table shows that delinquency cases did not score as well as non-delinquency cases on Stability or Prospects for Permanency; however, there were only three non-delinquency cases so having just one case score unacceptable led to a below standard score.

Case Type	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
Delinquency	3	67%	67%	100%	100%
Non-Delinquency	21	86%	67%	90%	76%

## RESULTS BY PERMANENCY GOAL

The following table compares how the different Permanency Goals performed on some key child status and core system performance indicators. There were five different Permanency Goal types represented in the case sample. Cases with the goal of Guardianship, Individualized Permanency, and Remain Home scored above standard on Prospects for Permanency. Surprisingly, cases with the goal of Adoption scored below standard (67%) and cases with the goal of Reunification fell even farther below standard (55%). The below standard score on the cases with Adoption goals was due to one case in which the aggressive and assaultive behavior of the target child was resulting in safety risks to others and placement disruptions for the child himself. For these reasons the case was also unacceptable on Overall Child Status. Cases with all other permanency goals were above standard on Overall Child Status. The previously mentioned case also led to below average performance for Adoption cases on Overall System Performance. Cases with goals of Individualized Permanency and Reunification also scored below standard. Cases with goals of Guardianship or Remain Home scored 100% on Overall System Performance.

Permanency Goal	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Adoption	3	67%	67%	67%	100%	67%	67%	67%	67%	67%	100%	67%
Guardianship (Non-Rel)	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Guardianship (Rel)	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Individualized Perm.	4	100%	75%	100%	75%	25%	75%	50%	25%	75%	100%	75%
Remain Home	5	100%	80%	100%	100%	80%	80%	100%	80%	80%	100%	100%
Reunification	11	91%	55%	91%	82%	73%	64%	27%	55%	82%	82%	73%

## RESULTS BY CASEWORKER DEMOGRAPHICS

### Caseload

The following table compares how caseload affected some key child status and core system performance indicators. Caseloads in the sample were divided into two categories: caseloads of 16 cases or less and caseloads of 17 cases or more. The case sample shows that 33% of the caseworkers have caseloads of 17 cases or more (8 of 24 workers). The smaller caseloads performed only slightly better on Overall Child Status, but performed dramatically better on Overall System Performance (94% to 50%).

Caseload Size	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
16 cases or less	16	94%	81%	94%	88%	81%	81%	81%	75%	88%	100%	94%
17 cases or more	8	88%	38%	88%	88%	38%	50%	0%	25%	63%	75%	50%

## Worker Experience

The following table compares how Length of Employment as a caseworker impacts performance. One highlight of the chart is that seven of the workers were hired within the past year after the lifting of the hiring freeze. Thirty-three percent of the workers in the sample had less than two years experience and 67% of the workers had less than five years experience. There was no correlation between the worker's experience and overall performance with the newest workers scoring 100% on both Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance. The data suggests that an individual worker's level of performance is more of a factor in determining outcomes than the amount of time they have been employed as a caseworker.

Length of Employment in Current Position	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
Less than 12 months	7	100%	100%	100%	86%	86%	86%	100%	100%	86%	100%	100%
12 to 24 months	1	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%
24 to 36 months	2	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%
36 to 48 months	1	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
48 to 60 months	5	60%	40%	60%	100%	60%	40%	20%	20%	40%	100%	60%
60 to 72 months	2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
More than 72 months	6	100%	50%	100%	83%	67%	67%	17%	33%	83%	83%	67%

## RESULTS BY OFFICE

The following table compares how offices within the region performed on some key child status and system performance indicators. Cases from seven offices in the Western Region were selected as part of the sample. Every office except the Spanish Fork office scored 100% on Overall Child Status. All offices except Orem and Spanish Fork scored above standard on Overall System Performance. The cases from American Fork, Heber, Nephi, and Wasatch Mental Health scored 100% on both Overall Child Status and Overall System Performance.

Office	# in Sample	Safety	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Engagement	Teaming	Assessment	Long-Term View	Child and Family Plan	Intervention Adequacy	Tracking & Adapting	Overall System Performance
American Fork	3	100%	67%	100%	100%	67%	67%	33%	67%	100%	100%	100%
Delta	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fillmore	0	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Heber	1	100%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%
Nephi	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%
Orem	6	100%	67%	100%	83%	83%	67%	50%	50%	83%	67%	67%
Provo	7	100%	71%	100%	86%	57%	86%	71%	57%	100%	100%	86%
Spanish Fork	5	60%	60%	60%	100%	60%	60%	40%	60%	40%	100%	60%
Wasatch Mental Health	1	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## RESULTS BY AGE

OSR looked at the effect of age on Stability, Permanency, Overall Child Status, and Overall System Performance. The scores on Stability and Permanency were highest for the youngest children. They were lowest for teens ages 11 to 15, with an especially big dip in Prospects for Permanency (43%).

Age	# in Sample	Stability	Prospects for Permanence	Overall Child Status	Overall System Performance
5 years of less	7	100%	86%	100%	71%
6-10 years	5	80%	60%	80%	60%
11-15 years	7	57%	43%	86%	100%
16 + years	5	100%	80%	100%	80%

## SYSTEM INDICATORS

Below is data for all system indicators (Engagement, Teaming, Assessment, Long-term View, Child and Family Plan, Intervention Adequacy, and Tracking and Adaptation) over the last 12 years showing how the ratings of 1 (completely unacceptable), 2 (substantially unacceptable), 3 (partially unacceptable), 4 (minimally acceptable), 5 (substantially acceptable) and 6 (optimal) are trending within each indicator. The table for each indicator in the section below shows an average and percentage score for that indicator. The line graph represents the percentage of the indicator that scored within the acceptable range. The most ideal trend would be to see an

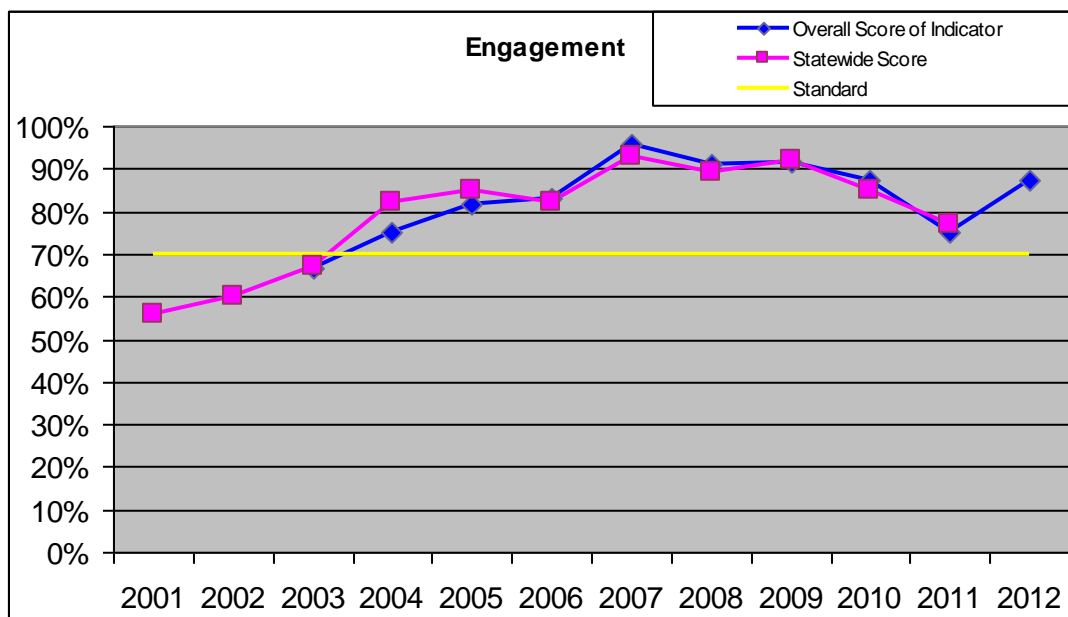
increase in the average score of the indicator along with an increase in the percentage score. Statewide scores for FY2012 will not be available until the end of the year and therefore do not appear in the tables or charts.

Western region's score on Overall System Performance has declined the past two years. The scores improved on three of the System Performance indicators (Engagement, Child and Family Plan and Tracking and Adapting). The other four System Performance indicators remained the same or declined (Teaming, Assessment, Long-term View, and Intervention Adequacy). Three System Performance indicators scored below standard (Teaming, Long-term View, and Child and Family Plan).

### Child and Family Engagement

Both the average and the percentage scores on Engagement showed an increase this year. Western region's score on this indicator has mirrored the state score for the past several years.

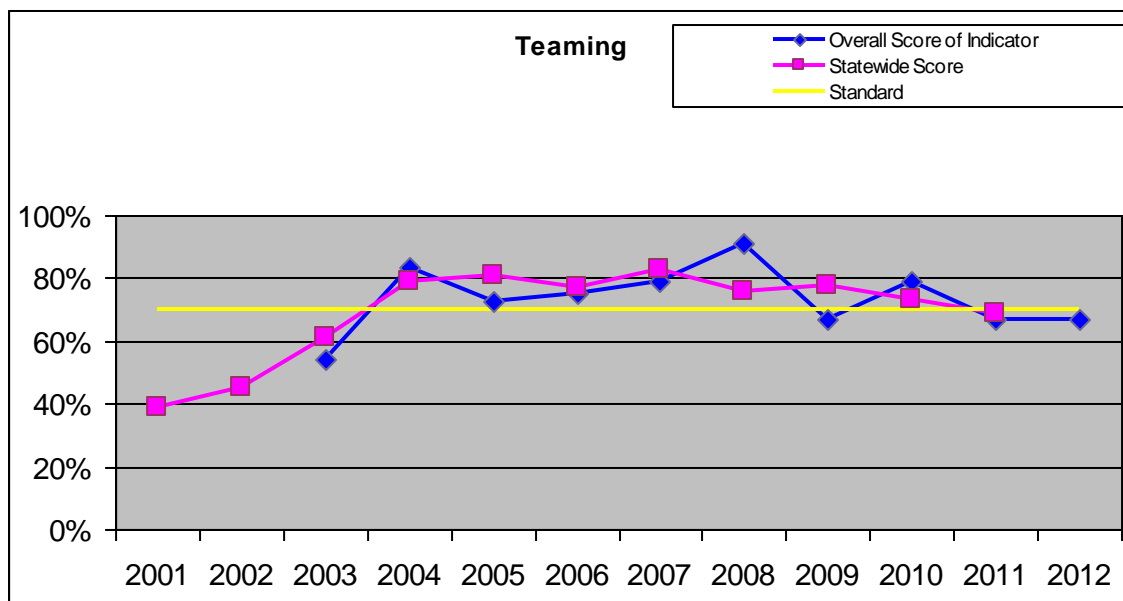
Engagement												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average Score of Indicator			3.75	4.17	4.36	4.42	4.46	4.43	4.58	4.58	4.08	4.57
Overall Score of Indicator			67%	75%	82%	83%	96%	91%	92%	88%	75%	88%
Statewide Score	56%	60%	67%	82%	85%	82%	93%	89%	92%	85%	77%	



## Child and Family Team and Coordination

The Teaming score fell from 79% to 67% last year and remained at 67% again this year, meaning it has scored below standard for two consecutive years. The average score this year was also the same as the average score last year. The region score fell just below the state score last year and is expected to do the same this year.

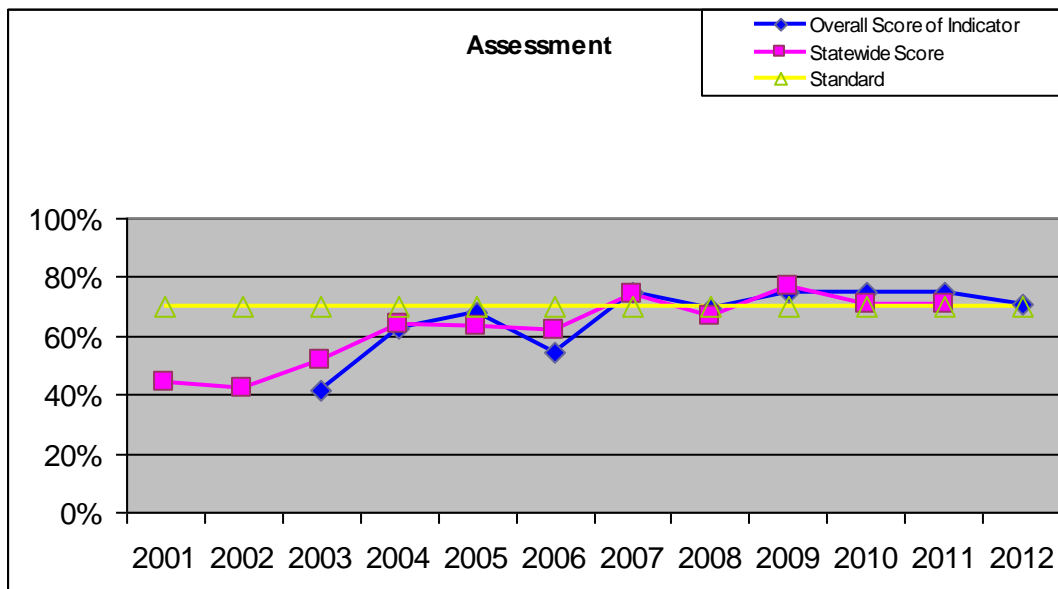
Teaming												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average Score of Indicator			3.67	4.08	4.18	4.17	4.08	4.39	4.08	4.33	4.00	4.00
Overall Score of Indicator			54%	83%	73%	75%	79%	91%	67%	79%	67%	67%
Statewide Score	39%	45%	61%	79%	81%	77%	83%	76%	78%	73%	69%	



## Child and Family Assessment

The score on Assessment has been very consistent, ranging from 70-75% over the past six years. Assessment was just above standard this year at 71%. Western Region has been scoring above the state average on this indicator. Although there was only a slight drop in the percentage score, there was a significant drop in the average score, meaning scores on the indicator were lower this year than they have been since 2006.

Assessment												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average Score of Indicator			3.33	3.79	3.82	3.83	3.96	3.87	3.92	4.00	4.04	<b>3.83</b>
Overall Score of Indicator			42%	63%	68%	54%	75%	70%	75%	75%	75%	<b>71%</b>
Statewide Score	44%	42%	52%	64%	63%	62%	74%	67%	77%	71%	71%	

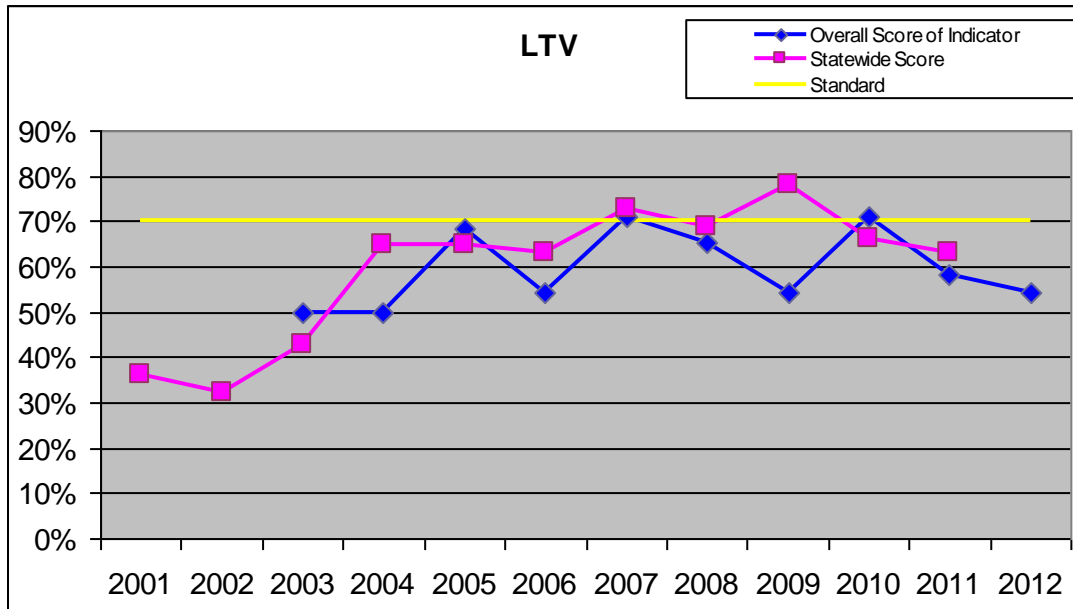


### Long-Term View

Long-term View scored a disappointing 58% last year and fell further this year to 54%; however, the average score on the indicator rose, meaning that the cases that were acceptable scored higher this year than they did last year. With the exception of FY2010, the region has scored below the state average since FY2006.

Long-Term View												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average Score of Indicator			3.38	3.58	3.91	3.71	3.92	3.91	3.54	3.88	3.63	<b>3.67</b>
Overall Score of Indicator			50%	50%	68%	54%	71%	65%	54%	71%	58%	<b>54%</b>
Statewide Score	36%	32%	43%	65%	65%	63%	73%	69%	78%	66%	63%	

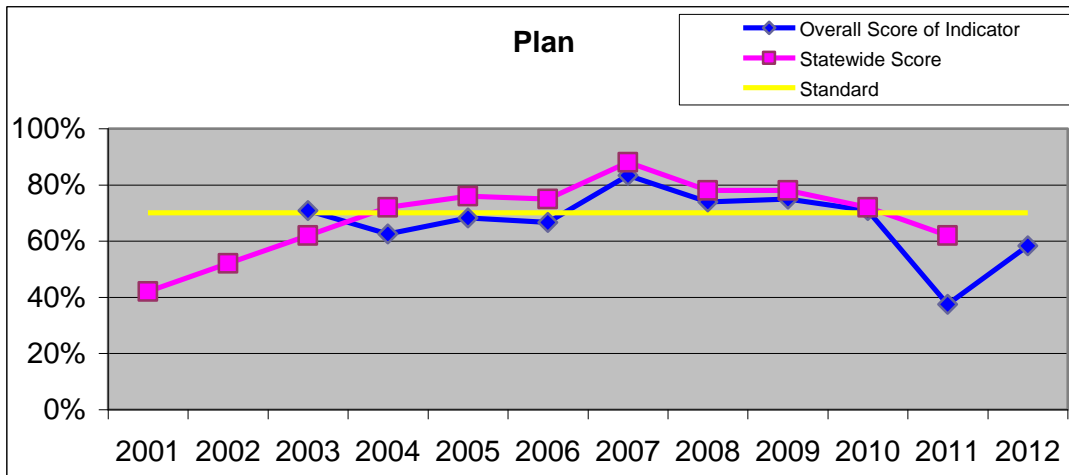




### Child and Family Plan

Although the Child and Family Plan indicator improved by 20 percentage points, it still scored well below standard (58%). This is the second lowest score the region has ever had on this indicator. The average score rose in conjunction with the increase in the percentage score, but is still the second lowest. The region has been below the state average on this indicator every year since FY2004.

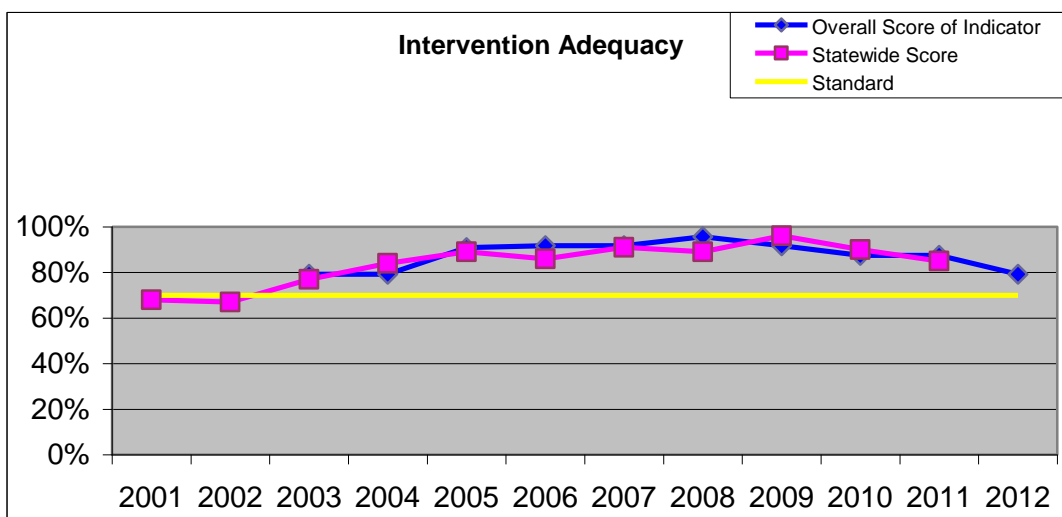
Child and Family Plan												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average Score of Indicator			3.83	3.83	4.09	3.96	4.13	4.00	3.96	3.83	3.33	3.75
Overall Score of Indicator			71%	63%	68%	67%	83%	74%	75%	71%	38%	58%
Statewide Score	42%	52%	62%	72%	76%	75%	88%	78%	78%	72%	62%	



### Intervention Adequacy

Both the percentage and the average score for Intervention Adequacy declined this year; however, the percentage score is still well above standard. The region has mirrored the state average for the past several years.

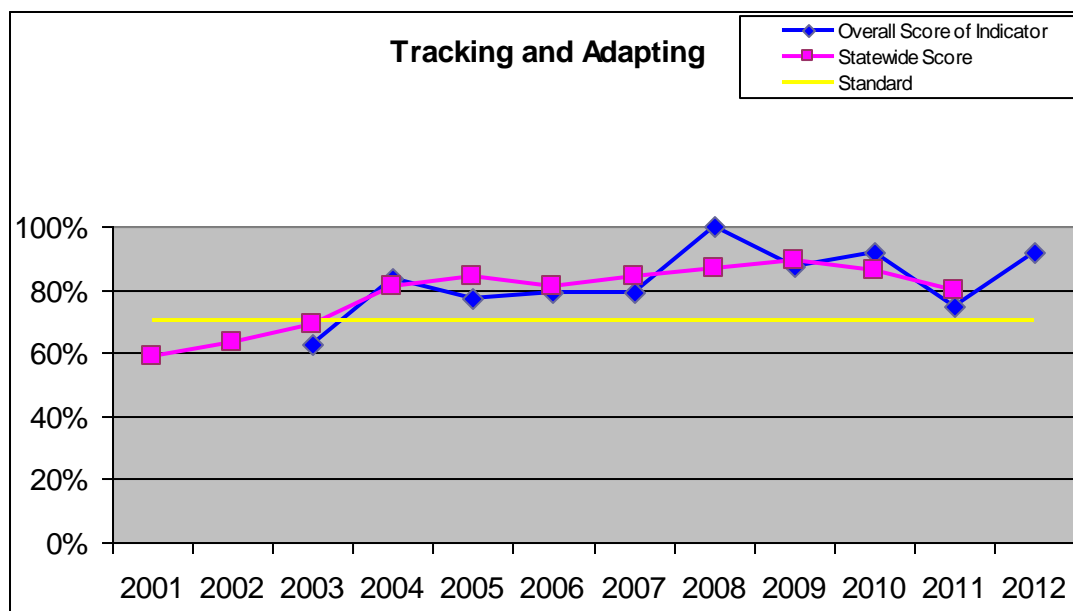
Intervention Adequacy												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average Score of Indicator			4.13	4.17	4.50	4.25	4.42	4.39	4.33	4.46	4.38	4.17
Overall Score of Indicator			79%	79%	91%	92%	92%	96%	92%	88%	88%	79%
Statewide Score	68%	67%	77%	84%	89%	86%	91%	89%	96%	90%	85%	



## Tracking and Adaptation

Both the percentage and the average scores for Tracking and Adapting rose significantly this year. The percentage score soared to 92%. The region has had excellent scores on this indicator for the past several years.

Tracking and Adaptation												
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Average Score of Indicator			3.96	4.46	4.36	4.42	4.46	4.74	4.42	4.50	4.17	<b>4.38</b>
Overall Score of Indicator			63%	83%	77%	79%	79%	100%	88%	92%	75%	<b>92%</b>
Statewide Score	59%	63%	69%	81%	84%	81%	84%	87%	89%	86%	80%	



## **V. Summary and Improvement Opportunities**

### **Summary**

During the FY2012 Western Region Qualitative Case Review (QCR), numerous strengths were identified about child welfare practice in the Western Region. It is clear that there is significant commitment and hard work devoted to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and families. During the QCR review, a few opportunities for practice improvement were also identified that could improve and enhance the services being provided.

The Region substantially exceeded the 85% standard for Overall Child Status with a score of 92%. This is the second consecutive year that the Overall Child Status scores exceeded the standard. It is also the second consecutive year that Safety has exceeded standard after falling below standard for the two previous years. All other Child Status indicators exceeded standard except for Prospects for Permanency which fell just below standard at 67%. Health/Physical well-being, Emotional/Behavioral Well-being, Learning, Family Connections, and Satisfaction all scored in the ninetieth percentile.

After years of above standard Overall System Performance, Western Region scored below standard last year on Overall System Performance at 83%, then fell even lower this year to 79%. Four of the System Performance indicators exceeded the 70% standard (Engagement, Assessment, Intervention Adequacy, and Tracking and Adapting). Teaming fell just below standard (67%) and Long-term View and Child and Family Plan fell significantly below standard (54% and 58% respectively). Although Child and Family Plan was significantly below standard, it improved 20 percentage points over last year's score.

### **Improvement Opportunities**

It is recommended that the Western Region use the 24 case stories as part of their ongoing effort to improve the services they provide to children and families. The case stories could be used to help sustain performance that is above standard and elevate performance that is below standard. Review of the case stories in which the indicators scored substantially well or optimal could be used as examples in an effort to help duplicate great work. Careful review of the case stories regarding the circumstances that resulted in the unacceptable ratings could be beneficial in formulating training opportunities or specific strategies to address those challenges. The region would benefit from focusing on the following indicators during the coming year.

### **Child Status**

Prospects for Permanence is the only Child Status indicator that fell below standard at 67%. In three of the eight cases permanency was unacceptable because the goal was reunification with the parents and it was unlikely the parents were going to be successful. In two of these three cases the barrier to the parents achieving reunification was substance abuse. Reviewers made the following comments relevant to permanency:

- Team members expressed concern about mother having an extension of reunification services due to her past history of alcohol abuse.
- A mental health assessment had not been completed and the underlying issues had not been identified to know specifically what mother needed to address mental health issues.
- The team was divided on whether father was an appropriate option for reunification or not.
- The caseworker had not discussed the option of guardianship or adoption with the child.
- Reunification services to mother had been terminated and the concurrent goal of reunification with father was in jeopardy due to a recent relapse.

An analysis of the case stories for the other five cases with unacceptable scores on this indicator revealed that barriers to permanency had more to do with the target children than the parents. In these five cases there were unique challenges due to the child's circumstances: two had major developmental delays, two were sexual perpetrators, and the other child kept disrupting placements due to his assaultive and aggressive behaviors. Reviewers mentioned that implementation of Practice Model to improve teaming and assessment may have led to improved outcomes for the children if team members had been able to identify issues earlier, put services in place earlier, identify transitions, and find more appropriate placements. The following are illustrative of their comments:

- Until a DSPD licensed home has been approved, a transition plan can't be developed.
- Difficult conversations haven't taken place about who will care for the target child in the event the caregiver becomes unable to care for him.
- A DSPD caseworker is not part of the team, and the DCFS caseworker doesn't understand how to navigate the DSPD process.
- Providers and caregivers feel that there has not been enough progress by the target child to ensure that he would not re-offend sexually if he returned home.
- Mother and stepfather still have work to do before they can provide the supervision the target child needs so that other children will not be victimized.
- The target child's history of sexual and physical abuse and the sexual abuse she has committed make finding permanency difficult.
- Grandparents do not feel they are able to provide the care the target child needs given his disabilities.

## **System Performance**

Three of the System Performance indicators fell below standard (Teaming-67%, Long-term View-54%, Child and Family Plan-58%) and another indicator scored barely above standard (Assessment-71%). Overall System Performance was also below standard for the second year in a row (from 83% in FY2011 to 79% in FY2012). OSR evaluated the case stories with unacceptable scores on Teaming, Long-term View and Child and Family Plan looking to explore how inadequate system performance affected outcomes for children and families.

## **Teaming**

There were eight cases that had acceptable scores on Teaming. In half of these cases the team met infrequently or rarely and they did not meet at critical points in the case such as when the child changed placement. On several cases the reviewers mentioned the team was missing critical professional team members or family members. In fact, in a couple of cases the caseworker missed critical team meetings. In some cases the members of the team didn't feel heard or there was a lack of information sharing or assessment. In every case the reviewers noted a direct correlation between the lack of teaming and an undesirable outcome for the child or family. Due to lack of teaming:

- A lack of face to face communication among providers, father, and caseworker was jeopardizing father's drug treatment and hence threatening the possible reunification of the father and child.
- A lack of discussion among team members about the child's potential and future led to stagnation of the child's development for a year.
- The child was not reunified with family at the time of the review, as the reviewers believe would have happened with the help of teaming.
- There had been no progress toward the goal of adoption.
- The caseworker didn't know how to access DSPD services for the child.
- The legal partners didn't know where the case was headed or what the caseworker hoped permanency would look like for the child.
- Mother's recent sobriety wasn't being supported and her chances of success were diminishing.
- Information about the child's behaviors was not shared and discussed by team members, which eventually resulted in a placement disruption.
- The team didn't know the child was two years behind in school.
- The worker thought the child was getting therapy but he was not, and help that DWS could have lent to mother was never offered.

## **Long-term View**

There were 11 cases with unacceptable scores on Long-term View. In all of these cases critical questions about the child's future safety and permanency remained unanswered. The following questions are illustrative of the types of questions that had not yet been adequately addressed by the Child and Family Team.

- If the concurrent goal had to be implemented, who would be the child's permanent caregiver?
- Where would the child go if the kinship placement disrupted?
- Where would the disabled child go if he couldn't remain in his current unlicensed home?
- What would happen to the children if mother wasn't successful at overcoming the issues that brought the child into care?
- What did mother need to help her overcome the issues that brought the child into care?

- How confident is the Team that mother will not relapse, leading the child to come into care again?
- What was in place to support that confidence?
- Where would the child go after he completed residential treatment?
- How confident was the Child and Family Team that the family would not become involved with DCFS again?

### **Child and Family Plan**

There were 10 cases with unacceptable scores on Child and Family Plan. Reviewers found that the content of the plans was out of date, the plans were not individualized to the child or parent, or the child or parent's needs were not addressed. In some cases the plan consisted only of Need 1 (a generic statement about basic needs generated by SAFE). In some of the cases there was a good working plan, but the working plan was not captured in the written document.